

# Superintendents' Update

## December 2001

### Bureau of Administration and School Improvement Services Iowa Department of Education

(This document is also available on the DE web site.)

[www.state.ia.us/educate/](http://www.state.ia.us/educate/)

1. **School Calendar: Early Start Waiver Request.** Again this year, school districts that wish to begin the 2002-03 school year prior to a day during the calendar week in which the first day of September falls (pursuant to 281—IAC Chapter 12) shall submit waiver requests on the spring BEDS. At any time prior to the request on spring BEDS, a district must hold a public hearing (which occurs at a Board of Education meeting) which allows the public a chance to comment on the request for early calendar start. *Districts no longer complete the early calendar start waiver request on paper through the mail. If your district has sent this request through the mail, it still needs to make this request on spring BEDS—this is the procedure by which the Department will approve the early start waiver request—no paper, please!*

Contact: Jeanette McGreevy, 515-281-4750, [jeanette.mcgreevy@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:jeanette.mcgreevy@ed.state.ia.us)

2. **House File 759: Flexibility in K-12 Funding.** During the November 2001 Iowa legislative special session, House File 759 was passed. It states: "The board of directors of a school district may use the categorical state funding identified in this section and received by the district, for any school general fund purpose." The state funding identified for a flexible use includes the following: 1) school improvement technology, 2) class size/early intervention, and 3) Phase III of Education Excellence.

The flexibility provided clearly means that districts may use the funds for any general fund purpose. However, districts should keep in mind that the legislature only authorized this flexibility for funds allocated for the 2001-02 school year and only for the categorical funds received for technology, early intervention, and Phase III. Each district should examine the short and long-term consequences of shifting the use of these funds.

Contact: Ann McCarthy, 515-281-3399, [ann.mccarthy@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:ann.mccarthy@ed.state.ia.us)

3. **Iowa Teachers Earn National Board Certification.** National Board Certification is a voluntary process administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and is achieved through a rigorous performance-based assessment that takes nearly a year to complete. Nationally, about 6,500 teachers from 49 states are certified. Eighty-seven Iowa teachers this year have earned National Board Certification, bringing to 321 the total number of Iowa teachers achieving this status.

Iowa teachers who have earned national certification are especially laudable not just for their hard work, but also for their proven commitment to quality teaching. Research consistently shows that a quality teacher is the strongest influence on how well a student learns. To see a complete list of Iowa teachers certified in 2001, go to <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/>.

Contact: Judy Jeffrey, 515-281-3333, [judy.jeffrey@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:judy.jeffrey@ed.state.ia.us)

School Leaders in Iowa

4. **Iowa Alternate Assessment Training**. Next spring the Department plans to implement the Iowa Alternate Assessment process for students with disabilities to comply with new federal guidelines that require all students, including those with several disabilities, to participate in district assessments.

Two training opportunities are being offered to administrators and teachers to help them understand the general scope and purpose of the Iowa Alternate Assessment process and how to work with other educators and parents during implementation. For more information and training dates, visit <http://www.state.ia.us/educate/>.

Contact: Steve Mauer, 515-281-3576, [steve.mauer@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:steve.mauer@ed.state.ia.us)

5. **Winter Institutes 2002: Teacher Quality**. The Department, in cooperation with SAI and Iowa ASCD, will provide information and skill development during Winter Institutes on **Teacher Quality**. The February 4 Winter Institute on Teacher Quality has been moved to February 12 to accommodate the schedule of Tom McGreal who will be in attendance at each Winter Institute.

These are the Winter Institute dates and locations: January 14 (Carroll), February 11 (Cedar Rapids), and February 12 (West Des Moines). Additional information and registration forms will be mailed by School Administrators of Iowa (SAI).

Contact: Elaine Smith-Bright, 515-440-6872, [smith-bright@sai-iowa.org](mailto:smith-bright@sai-iowa.org)

6. **Re-Check You Annual Transportation Report Figures Online**. The Department is encouraging all schools to go to back into the DE's on-line data entry program and re-examine your Annual Transportation Report data. The web site address is ([www.edinfo.state.ia.us](http://www.edinfo.state.ia.us)). Once into the site, you will need to enter your assigned ID and password. Go to the "Certification" form and compare the figures that are now on line with those that you printed off the online program at the time you certified your ATR data. We recently discovered that some schools failed to hit the "update" button after making changes to their report data and then left the program before the program had re-calculated and updated their figures. We were able to identify several instances where this happened, and in most cases have updated the data for you; however, your district's file copy may be slightly different than what is now on-line. Simply compare the summary data on the "Certification" form with your file copy. You may also see a slight difference in net operating cost, average cost per pupil transported or cost per mile, etc. on this page due to a program modification that corrected the way these calculations were being rounded. This was necessary to make final figures, used in reporting, consistent between the on-line data file and our mainframe calculations. The Department appreciates your cooperation in submitting your ATR data electronically for the first time this year. We hope to make further improvements in this program for next year and would entertain any constructive comments you might have that will make this process easier for you. Send your comments to the e-mail address below.

**Do you charge fees for "in-town" or discretionary transportation?**

With the current round of budget reductions, the Department has received several inquiries relating to the charging of fees for discretionary transportation services. If you are currently charging parents a fee for non-required student transportation, the Department would like to hear from you. Please send Terry Voy a brief e-mail explaining what you are currently doing. Please include the following:

- a. Are the guidelines and fees charged for discretionary transportation outlined in board policy?  
(If you can attach copy of your policy that would be greatly appreciated and helpful to other superintendents that are considering a fee policy.)
- b. What is your fee structure?

Note: For those of you filing nonpublic transportation claims, the Department should be making the on-line claim report available at [www.edinfo.state.ia.us](http://www.edinfo.state.ia.us) by December 15th.

The second semester School Bus Inspection Schedule will be available on the DE web site at the latest by January 1, 2002.

Thank you!

Contact: Terry Voy, 515-281-4749, [terry.voy@ed.state.ia.us](mailto:terry.voy@ed.state.ia.us)

## Quotations for Success

"I think our story proves there's absolutely no limit to what plain, ordinary, working people can accomplish if they're given the opportunity and encouragement to do their best." Sam Walton, Founder, Wal-Mart

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"In our culture, consensus is a management tool for reaching better decisions than you would have reached on your own." Rod Canion, Co-founder, Compaq Computers

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Here, almost in its entirety, is the employee handbook of Nordstrom, a Washington-based clothing retailer:

- We're glad to have you with our company.
  - Our number-one goal is to provide outstanding customer service.
  - Set both your personal and professional goals high.
  - We have great confidence in your ability to achieve them.
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"Manufacturing excellence results from dedication to daily progress. Making something a little better every day." Robert Hall, Professor, Indiana University

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Three principles of Whole Foods, the Texas-based natural foods grocer:

- All work is teamwork.
  - Anything worth doing is worth measuring.
  - Be your own toughest competitor.
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"You can dream, create, design, and build the most wonderful place in the world . . . but it requires people to make the dream a reality." Walt Disney

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